

INTRODUCING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACQUISITION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Improvement Act of 2009. This legislation addresses serious long-term procurement problems within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and would provide the VA with greater oversight of its contracting and asset management processes.

VA has annual expenditures of more than \$14.1 billion for supplies, services, and construction. The Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 is a first step to provide a centralized oversight and policy for contracting and acquisition within the Department by streamlining business operations under an Assistant Secretary for Acquisition, Construction and Asset Management. This bill will improve procurement processes by:

Establishing the position of the Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Acquisition, Construction and Asset Management who would serve as the Chief Acquisition Officer for the VA.

Providing an appropriate structure for acquisition policy and oversight over contracts and purchases.

Requiring the Secretary to establish and maintain a comprehensive centralized Department-wide acquisition program, and to develop a streamlined approach to purchasing goods and services.

Providing VA the authority to use personal services contracts to ensure patients at VA medical facilities are provided quality contract care without unnecessary expenses.

Authorizing the VA to have complete responsibility and auditing authority for the two Federal Supply Schedules delegated to the VA by the General Services Administration.

Providing a clear definition for small business concerns to be listed in the database of veteran-owned businesses maintained by the VA.

I am pleased to be joined by a number of members in introducing this much needed legislation, and urge my colleagues to support the bill.

COMMENDING THE SOLDIERS AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL STATIONED AT FORT GORDON

SPEECH OF

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 206, a resolution commending the soldiers and civilian personnel stationed at Fort Gordon and their families for their service and dedication to the United States and recognizing the contributions of Fort Gordon to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and its role as a pivotal communications training installation.

Fort Gordon dates to 1940, when the United States Army recognized a need for a military installation near Augusta, Georgia that could aid in combat during the ensuing Second World War. The groundbreaking actually took place in 1941, and the base was originally named Camp Gordon after John B. Gordon, a general during the Civil War and former Governor of Georgia. During World War II, Camp Gordon was home to the 4th Infantry Division, 26th Infantry Division, and 10th Armored Division of the Army until they were deployed to Europe. However, in 1948, Camp Gordon became the home of the Signal Corps Training Center—for which it is most commonly known today.

Throughout the Korean war the need for signalmen grew, and the Signal Corps Training Center became the largest single source for Army communications specialists. Camp Gordon was also made a permanent installation in 1956 and was renamed Fort Gordon. Further, during the Vietnam war era and after, communications specialists became an absolutely necessary component of highly technological and modernized warfare, and Fort Gordon was recognized as an exemplary institution for these soldiers as the Signal Corps Training Center came to be known as the United States Army Signal Center at Fort Gordon.

Fort Gordon and the troops and families stationed there were instrumental in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and during the 1990s the installation was responsible for training most of the DoD personnel who operate and maintain satellites, as well as training signal troops of allied and former nations.

Currently, approximately 19,000 soldiers are stationed at Fort Gordon, and Augusta has been a welcome home to all of them. To this day, the base continues its tradition of success in the Signal Corps, as it trains soldiers for deployment into theater in Iraq and Afghanistan. On behalf of Georgia's 11th Congressional District, I am proud of the continued dedication to the safety and security of the United States of the men and women at Fort Gordon and thank them for their nearly 60 years of service to this Nation. Georgia has been blessed with an abundance of willing men and women who are committed to ensuring freedom and liberty for America, and I thank each of them for their service.

I believe that the brave men and women at Fort Gordon and every military installation who sacrifice for our present freedoms deserve our fullest support. Our Nation's service men and women represent the best our country has to offer, and they must be treated with the respect and honor they deserve. As we ask these courageous soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—and their families—to do more and more, it's only right we continue doing all we can for them. Commending the accomplishments and service of our troops at Fort Gordon is just one small example of the gratitude that every American should express to our troops at home and abroad.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

IN MEMORY OF JODIE MAHONY

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Joseph "Jodie" Mahony II of El Dorado, Arkansas, who passed away on Saturday, December 5, 2009, at the age of 70. Having served 36 years in the Arkansas state legislature, Jodie was a legend in Arkansas government and politics and his presence will be deeply missed.

Jodie committed his life to making Arkansas a better place to get an education, to live and to work. He was first elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives in 1970 and served 24 years before winning a Senate seat in 1994. In 2002, after two 4-year terms, when newly adopted term limits kept him from seeking re-election as senator, he ran for the House again, where he was still eligible to serve two more 2-year terms.

Jodie retired officially from elected office in 2006, but his presence remained at the State Capitol where he served as a part-time aide to the House Speaker during the 2007 legislative session. Throughout his career, Jodie filed 1,429 bills, with much of his efforts focused on public and higher education, the developmentally disabled, child support enforcement and natural resources conservation.

In addition to Jodie's public service, he and his family have played an influential role in the state's legal history. The grandson and son of lawyers, Jodie followed in his family's footsteps to become a lawyer, and today, in its 113th year, the Mahony law firm is the oldest operating law firm in the State of Arkansas. Jodie also served in the U.S. Marine Corps in active duty and the reserves.

Our State is better for Jodie's service to it and its people. I never thought of Jodie as a politician, but rather as a statesman. He had the respect of every legislator for his knowledge, fairness and commitment to our great State. I had the privilege of serving with Jodie during my time in the Arkansas state legislature from 1991 through 2000 and he was a friend, a role model and someone I trusted for sincere advice and counsel.

My thoughts and prayers and those of every Arkansan are with Jodie's family during this difficult time, especially to his wife, Bettie Anne; his two sons, Joseph K. Mahony III and Michael Emon Mahony; and three grandchildren, Jordan, Alexandra and Joseph K. Mahony IV.

Jodie will be deeply missed, but never forgotten. Although he is no longer with us, Jodie's many contributions to improving our state will continue on forever, serving as a reminder of his hard work and many good deeds throughout an accomplished legislative career and life.

IN HONOR OF MRS. EDITH ARMSTEAD GRAY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the legacy of